



For Meeting at Fond du Lac on 7/20/05

John Verhyen thanked Chief Barthuly for inviting WICORTS.

John Verhyen: There is no FCC requirement for compliance with the digital technology. There is an FCC mandate for compliance with the narrowband technology by Jan 1, 2013. Narrowband P25 is readily available at some lower pricing than in the past. There are several vendors that offer P25 equipment. Everything done in the public safety communications world is going to cost more than in the past. We just have to adjust to it. The Federal Department of Justice still has the cops grants that municipal and county agencies are eligible for. State agencies are not eligible for these grants.

When moving forward with a project it is necessary to understand that you need to work with the 80% that are supportive and not spend a lot of time trying to convince the 20% that are not supportive that they are wrong. You will end up with no project or a greatly delayed project if you don't stick with the 80%. Get MOU's in place even if everyone is in agreement in the beginning. Personnel and attitudes can change over time so you need to be protected for the long term.

SafeCom Recommendations

John Verhyen: SafeComm is a federal program housed in the Department of Homeland Security. They have a public safety communications focus.

Several pieces of the P25 standard are not complete at this time but all indications are that they will be by the end of the year and at the very latest the first quarter of next year. As it stands today, for example, a Motorola backbone cannot talk to a M/A-COM backbone. There is also no interface standard for connecting a console to the base/repeater stations.

Sam Steffan: If you have trunking now would you get the new standard?

John Verhyen: That is hard to answer now because some of the standards may be a simple flash upgrade or there could be some hardware that has to change as well. I will keep you updated. My understanding is that some standards will be a simple flash.

Sam Steffan: Would the standard be supplied to people that currently have equipment at no charge from the vendors?

John Verhyen: I don't know, but will find out.

Unknown: We are dealing with Motorola and they cannot do trunking and conventional in the same console.

Sam Steffan: What about Phase II P25?

John Verhyen: The last standards are to be in place by the end of this year. Three protocols have been submitted. Two 2-slot Time Division Multiple Access protocols and one Frequency Division Multiple Access protocol are on the table. EADS, Motorola and M/A-COM are involved with this process. It would be good to have TDMA in the radio because you can do four time slots within the main channel bandwidth that in effect gives you 3 additional channels.

Unknown: If the State builds a backbone will there be a redundant controller?

John Verhyen: Yes.

Gale Sorum: Closed the grant for 2004 on 7/15/05. Homeland Security funds will shrink for the 05 grants. Funds are being moved to larger cities. Cities like Fond du Lac may receive very little or nothing. A review panel is evaluating the grant applications. The SIEC held six field listening sessions throughout the State to gather information directly from the users as to what they want to happen in the communications arena.

Jerrienne Feiten: There will be a multiple vendor communications symposium held in Milwaukee County at the Academy in Franklin on 10/11/05. It is sponsored by the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Department with support from Evans and Associates. There will be demonstrations and short classes.

Comments: To get any amount of grant money, no matter what the venue, you will have to do joint projects that include multiple agencies and disciplines. You don't all want to be going in different directions.

Washington County: Needs to upgrade their communications system.

Dodge County Fire: Experienced initial lack of interoperability (about 1/2 hour) during a fire the previous Tuesday.

Hartford PD: Advisory committee making decisions for all agencies in the county. Usually users are not considered. Has never heard mention of a State system. The SIEC should be sharing a broader interoperability umbrella to the counties than just counties working with their municipalities. Our county needs radios now.

Unknown: We have radios that we will no longer be able to get parts for next year. SIEC is asking us locals to wait. How long do we wait and why should we wait? What is the SIEC coming up with?

John Verhyen: Do what is absolutely necessary now. If there are first responder safety issues, take care of them now. No one wants someone to die so we can prove the point.

Steve Sporle: Must replace our 20-year-old console. Going to purchase an orbicom.

Sam Steffan: Do not let a vendor write the RFP for you. I have equipment that we are trying to get rid of. I will put together a list of equipment that you can look at and see if any of it would be helpful for you. By the way, there is no charge for the equipment.

Walter Peterson: Capitol Police have aging radios and console. Can't get parts for the radios. Haven't budgeted for dollars for an upgrade yet. Madison is 800 MHz and the County is VHF. Which way should everybody be going to get compatibility?

Gary Dikkers: FAA is making some changes. Everything is going through Texas now. The guy that looks at the Wisconsin documents is now in Boston rather than Illinois.

Jerrienne Feiten: Milwaukee County is assembling a four county consortium to work together. It will consist of Milwaukee, Waukesha, Racine and Kenosha Counties and the City of Milwaukee. We actually have people willing to talk together.

Dwight Maasz: Had a fire at a plastics manufacturing plant. Eleven fire departments responded.

Hal Swanstrom: We have a 12 county group called the WCIA. We are in the process of identifying a direction. I wish the SIEC would have been started a long time ago. There should have been a program supporting a consistent theme across the state. The things we are doing now should be moving us towards a statewide solution.

Mark Schomisch: I am the chair of the communications committee. Three institutions needed upgrades. Two were going to digital and one analog. The info shared at WICORTS prompted us to look at multiple vendors. Discovered that there are vendors out there with considerably less dollars attached to their products. We are now writing an RFP.

Kevin Lemke: Everyone has to have the same goal for any interoperability solution to work.

Gary McClelland: We are investing in P25 and as we upgrade to digital we will be able to maintain backward and forward compatibility. Still on low band in some places. We have applied for VHF highband frequencies. This will allow us to provide the Sheriff's Department with access to our agencies when in the prisons. Some radios are not narrowband compatible.

John Verhyen: All radios produced today are narrowband capable. You have plenty to pick from.

Ron Thurley: Looking to upgrade. Need a new tower. Would be open to sharing someone else's tower if one is available in the area where we need it.

John Verhyen: Look to get funding from the private sector in your area. Let them know that better communications in their area means better security in their area. Be careful that they don't try to run the show. Let them know that you are only looking for a donation not an implementer.

Gary Heschke: I learned a lot in the NEWCOM group. Working together has been a good experience. The State won't make up its mind to go anywhere unless it is pushed. The decision will come from these consortiums.

Lynn Boening: OJA should have a good idea of where to go from all the studies that were submitted. We have a good idea of where we are going in spite of the state. We can't wait. We need equipment now. We need to adapt to state agencies because we get a lot of info at WICORTS and started working together.

Claudette Higgins: Please write RFPs in at least 12-point type to accommodate the seeing impaired. In the past, we applied for several grants for different phases of interoperability.

Paul Wittkamp: I attended several of the SIEC listening sessions. I see training as a huge issue as we move forward with policy and technology changes. First responders need to know what new policies are and how to use the technology.

Ken Moran: Our county runs the show pretty much like the county Hartford is in.

Waukesha County: Has centralized dispatch but doesn't know the jurisdictions. They send officers from further down the road when there is someone much closer that should have gotten the call.